

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and apparatus for enabling any of a variety of devices to communicate with each other over a common or universal protocol. In general, a client device and a server device communicate with each other over a communications link utilizes the common protocol. Initially, once a communications link is established, the server device identifies itself to the client device by sending a tag line message over the communications link. Upon receiving the tag line message, the client then determines that the server is capable of using the common protocol. The client device may then initiate several requests including a service request, a type request or a use request. If the client device initiates a service request, the client simple uses the common protocol to request the service. In response to receiving the service request, the server device performs the requested service and provides a confirmation to the client device. If the client device initiates a type request, the service device will respond by providing information regarding the services the server device provides and the device types supported by the server device. If the client device initiates a use request for a particular service, the server device will provide information to the client device that describes the necessary parameters for invoking the particular service.

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